

Message Text

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22

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 ACDA-10 /071 W

----- 041930

R 181530Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4498

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS LUSAKA 3105

GENEVA FOR WISNER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RH

SUBJ: ZAMBIAN PRESS ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS -- NOVEMBER 18

REF: LUSAKA 3088

SUMMARY: A POSITIVE ARTICLE ON THE PROSPECTS OF THE GENEVA TALKS WAS FEATURED ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE OF THE NOVEMBER 18 DAILY MAIL. THE SIGNED ARTICLE ACKNOWLEDGES THE COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED -- HERITAGE OF SMITH-NATIONALIST ANTAGONISM, DISPUTE OVER DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE, ISSUE OF THE CONTROL OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE AND BRITISH RELUCTANCE TO ASSUME DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY. HOWEVER, AUTHOR FINDS JUSTIFICATION FOR CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM IN FACT THAT NATIONALISTS AND WHITE RHODESIANS ARE TALKING TO EACH OTHER. HE ALSO NOTES CHAIRMAN RICHARD'S PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT HE BELIEVES ZIMBABWE WILL BE INDEPENDENT WITHIN TWO YEARS AS AN INDICATION THAT THINGS MAY NOT BE AS BAD IN GENEVA AS THEY APPEAR. BOTH DAILIES REPORT NOV 17 ACTIVITIES IN GENEVA AND TIMES OF ZAMBIA NOTES CONVENING OF FRONT-LINE STATES DEFENSE MINISTERS IN MAPUTO. END SUMMARY

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1. A DAILY MAIL ARTICLE SIGNED BY MOHSIN ALI APPEARING ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE NOV 18 ENTITLED, " GENEVA CONFERENCE REACHES CRUCIAL PHASE," EXPLORES THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA, BUT ENDS ON OPTIMISTIC NOTE THAT THE TALKS WILL NOT COLLAPSE AND ZIMBABWEAN INDEPENDENCE WILL BE ACHIEVED WITHIN TWO YEARS. AUTHOR POINTS OUT THAT MEETING IS NO SMALL ACCOMPLISHMENT IN ITSELF CONSIDERING THAT ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAD ORDERED TEN-YEAR PRISON SENTENCES FOR THREE OF THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS. RICHARD'S OBSERVATIONS THAT QUARREL OVER DATE OF INDEPENDENCE IS MORE A TECHNICAL THAN POLITICAL ARGUMENT AND THAT HE DOES NOT EXPECT BREAKDOWN OF THE TALKS ARE NOTED AS POSITIVE SIGNS. THE ELEVEN POINT BRITISH TALKING PAPER ON THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS LOADED WITH LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITIES, BUT THESE TOO CAN BE OVERCOME. THE APPARENTLY FIRM BRITISH REFUSAL TO ASSUME COLONIAL RESPONSIBILITIES MAKES A SOLUTION MORE DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. AUTHOR CONCLUDES THAT IT WILL TAKE A FEW DAYS OR WEEKS TO ESTABLISH WHETHER RICHARD'S OPTIMISM THAT ZIMBABWE WILL BE INDEPENDENT WITHIN TWO YEARS IS JUSTIFIED OR NOT.

2. BOTH PAPERS USED WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS OF RICHARD'S NOVEMBER 17 MEETING WITH MUZOREWA AND MUZOREWA'S WRITTEN DECLARATION THAT HE IS NOT DEALING UNDER THE TABLE AT THE CONFERENCE, PLUS HIS ASSERTION THAT HIS GROUP HAD NOT RECEIVED RICHARD'S PROPOSAL ON INDEPENDENCE DATES IN ADVANCE. DAILY MAIL ACCOUNT SPELLS OUT MUZOREWA'S FOUR-POINT PROPOSAL PRESENTED TO RICHARD AND NOTES THAT RHODESIAN NATIONALS RESIDENT IN ZAMBIA SUPPORT PATRIOTIC FRONT'S DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE IN 12 MONTHS. TIMES' ACCOUNT OF GENEVA ACTIVITIES ADDS A REPORT FROM SALISBURY THAT ONE RHODESIAN SOLDIER WAS KILLED IN 12-HOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH FREEDOM FIGHTERS SOMEWHERE IN RHODESIA.

3. THE TIMES OF ZAMBIA CARRIES REPORT FROM RADIO MAPUTO OF THE MEETING OF THE FRONT-LINE STATES' DEFENSE MINISTERS FROM TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, ANGOLA, AND MOZAMBIQUE IN MAPUTO NOV 17.
LOW

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, NATIONALISM, CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LUSAKA03105
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760431-0975
From: LUSAKA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761135/aaaabduq.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LUSAKA 3088
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: powellba
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 AUG 2004 by vandyklc>; APPROVED <16 NOV 2004 by powellba>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZAMBIAN PRESS ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN AFFAIRS -- NOVEMBER 18
TAGS: PFOR, RH, ZA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006